

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup on H.R. 3826, the “Electricity Security and Affordability Act” and H.R. 2126, the
“Better Buildings Act.”
January 27, 2014**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we will markup two important, bipartisan energy bills as part of our open, “all-of-the-above” approach to protect jobs and keep energy affordable for all Americans. These bills, H.R. 3826, the “Electricity Security and Affordability Act,” and H.R. 2126, the “Better Buildings Act” are positive steps toward a more sensible energy policy for the nation.

Coal is our largest source of electricity and a significant driver of jobs. It is both plentiful and affordable, and the energy produced from it is highly reliable. With coal as a foundation of our all-of-the-above strategy, we have a diverse and secure electricity portfolio that also includes natural gas, nuclear, and renewables. And with coal, we can continue providing homeowners and small businesses with reasonable electric bills, and manufacturers with low energy costs that help them remain globally competitive. But EPA’s proposed greenhouse gas standards for new coal-fired power plants threaten the viability and reliability of our entire system.

EPA’s harm is no longer speculative as a number of coal-fired power plants have already shuttered or are scheduled to close in the near future. Their owners have attributed the shutdowns, at least in part, to EPA regulations enacted over the last five years. Jobs have already been lost as a consequence of these anti-coal measures, and EPA’s proposed rule would serve to accelerate the demise of coal. The agency’s proposed New Source Performance Standards would surely be the nail in the coffin for any future coal-fired power plants, requiring carbon capture and storage technologies that are not commercially available.

The Electricity Security and Affordability Act is necessary to keep EPA accountable and to keep American energy affordable and reliable. It contains a number of eminently reasonable measures to ensure that coal remains a part of our future, and I would like to thank my colleague Ed Whitfield as well as Sen. Joe Manchin for their work on this bipartisan and bicameral bill.

I urge my colleagues to join me in standing up for jobs and passing this thoughtful legislation to restore balance to EPA’s power plant regulations.

We will also consider H.R. 2126, the “Better Buildings Act,” a bipartisan bill authored by Reps. David McKinley (R-WV) and Peter Welch (D-VT). The legislation takes a critical step for energy efficiency by facilitating greater cooperation between landlords and tenants to save energy in our nation’s commercial buildings. It takes a market-driven, voluntary, “best practices” approach to align building owners and occupants to reduce energy usage. I commend my colleagues for their bipartisan efforts on this important legislation and urge its approval.

The cold weather we have experienced in recent weeks underscores just how important it is to have affordable energy for our homes and businesses. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support these two bills as part of a true “all-of-the-above” energy strategy.

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